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FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND
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Sir H. Caccia

No. 785

D. 3.01 a.m. March 28, 1961

March 27, 1961

R. 4.00 a.m. March 28, 1961

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 785 of March 27.

Repeated for information to Paris and Bangkok.

and Saving to Moscow and U.K. Del. NATO.

*(Reprinted to West
Indies for PM) Track 4
29/3.*

The President's letter to General de Gaulle: Laos.

The State Department told us today that General de Gaulle's reply which was handed to the President on his return from Florida last night made the following points:

(a) he agreed that the West could not allow Laos to be completely overrun by the Communists;

(b) he rehearsed at some length past errors which had been committed in Laos;

(c) he indicated his general agreement with the latest British proposals but indicated that in his view the reconvening of the I.C.C. ought to precede the cease fire;

(d) he proposed that the three Western Governments should open discussions in Moscow with the Soviet Government on:

(i) the cessation of further arms deliveries to Laos;

(ii) the convening of a conference;

(iii) the broadening of the Laotian Government.
In this connexion he expressed the opinion that Prince Souveranna Phouma was the only man to head such a government;

(e) he expressed his opposition to S.E.A.T.O. intervention.

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2. The French Ambassador after handing over the letter drove with the President from the airport to the White House. The President said that he favoured consultation between the three Western Governments and thought indeed it was precisely as a result of such consultation that the recent United Kingdom proposals had been evolved. If these proposals were now accepted by the U.S.S.R. the Laotian crisis would be resolved. The Russian response might, however, be negative and it was necessary to plan in S.E.A.T.O. for that contingency. The President described in general terms some of the para-military measures which meanwhile the United States had in mind. The President also said that if the worst came to the worst it would be necessary to maintain certain bridgeheads in Laos but he did not enlarge on this and restricted himself to making it plain that in his view any eventual action should be by S.E.A.T.O. Finally, the President emphasized the importance of not allowing any Western differences to emerge during the S.E.A.T.O. conference.

3. The French Ambassador had independently given me a similar account.

Foreign Office pass to Paris, Bangkok and Savig to Moscow and U.K. Del. NATO as my telegrams Nos. 118, 88, 79 and 160 respectively.

[Repeated as requested]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Lord Privy Seal
Sir F. Hoyer Millar
Sir H. Stephenson
Mr. MacDermot
Head of South-East Asia
Department

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